

Dr. Arthur S. Flemming.

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Findings on Cancer, Cigarette Link Seen Needed for Ban

By MARY McGAREY

If scientists ever isolate a cancer-causing agent in cigarettes, the U.S. government will ban its use at once, Dr. Arthur S. Flemming declared Wednesday.

Here to address a Methodist hospital convention, the secretary of health, education and welfare answered a series of press conference questions on the "canberry issue" and branched off into cigarettes, tainted poultry and lipstick color.

SO FAR AS THE cancer-causing properties in cigarettes go—or may go, Flemming said his department is doing all it can.

"The Public Health Service is limited to publishing the facts and letting people decide for themselves. That's all we can do.

"If the time should ever come when scientists identify an exact substance in cigarettes or tobacco which causes cancer, then we can immediately ban its use—and would."

HARKING BACK TO the cranberry furor at Thanksgiving, and the poultry stir at Christmas time, Flemming declared, "I would have done nothing different and, if confronted with a comparable situation in the future, will do the same thing."

"We were dealing with a substance that, in the diet of test animals, produced cancer," he explained. "Research scientists at the National Can-

cer Institute tells us that, with such substances, no one knows how much or how little will induce cancer in man."

FLEMMING SAID his office is currently supporting inclusion of an anti-cancer clause in the color additives bill now before Congress, which has caused such a stir in the lipstick industry.

Basically, he explained, the question is on the toxicity of certain color dyes used in large amounts; and the bill would allow use of these colors in small quantities.

The cancer clause would provide simply that no color found to have cancer-causing properties could be used in any amount. "Even without the clause," Flemming noted, "we could enforce this under our general authority."

IN ANY FUTURE "alert" on a cancer-causing agent, Flemming added, he believes his department should attempt to inform state health departments or other affected state agencies more fully and promptly than was done in the recent incidents.

In his address to the convention, the secretary advocated the abolition of aid categories (blind, aged, dependent children, etc.) in federal funds allotted for public assistance.

HE ARGUED THAT a single grant would eliminate much red tape and relieve social workers from the time-consuming task of scanning regulations in deciding which

fund should be tapped for a particular need.

Later, he declared he believes the same idea could logically be carried down to the state level.

"AS I SEE IT," he explained, "here's the family. They need help. Let's determine their need and provide it. Professional welfare workers would be tickled to death if their work could be simplified in this way."

Flemming said he does not advocate such streamlining of governmental public assistance as an impetus for single-drive campaigns of private health and welfare agencies.

"I am rather sympathetic to the idea of separate private agencies," he said. "There are arguments on both sides, but there is much to be said for your right to give your money specifically to the cause you want to support."

The church board honored Flemming and three other men as "outstanding contributors of time, service or money to Methodist philanthropic institutions."

Besides Flemming, they are Pierre S. du Pont, III, secretary of E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., Inc., Wilmington, Del.; J. Webster Hancox, Spokane, Wash., chairman of the Deaconess Hospital board, and Dr. Ulysses G. Jones, Johnson City, Tenn., chief of staff at Jones Hospital.

All four were named to the Methodist Hall of Fame in Philanthropy.

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